BUILDING A CATALYTIC ENTERPRISE

MARK MCCLOSKEY

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages— so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." So, he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

Expansion is the heart beat of Christianity. Jesus defined the mission and scope of the first century church in terms of both geographic and cultural expansion (Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:45-49). The first century church properly understood the scope of its mission to include both the "whole world" and "all nations". The term for "all nations in Matthew 28:19 is panta ta ethna and is better translated, "all ethnic groups". It is the nature of the gospel to grow, increase and bear fruit "all over the world" (Colossians 1:6). It is the nature of the gospel to break down and cross over the dividing walls of race, ethnicity and culture (see Acts10, Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-22).

Acts 1:8 speaks to the Spirit-led geographic and cultural expansion of the church to expand the scope of its geographical borders (from hometown to the ends of the earth) and to cross racial, ethnic and cultural borders (from Jews to Samarians to Gentiles). As missiologist Dean Gilliland stated, "Paul had boundless confidence in the Holy Spirit. This is the Spirit who energized the church to enlarge its borders by ceaseless evangelism" (Gilliland, 1983, p. 45). This ceaseless evangelism would take the apostle Paul and the early Christians not only to the ends of the earth, but to the Gentiles and barbarians,

slaves and freemen (Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:28). This "apostolic spirit" of expansion and border crossing is, I believe, at the heart of the calling and mission of Campus Crusade for Christ.

BUILDING THE ENTERPRISE

I define an enterprise as a "complex undertaking requiring multiple partnerships, an expanding resource base, and the judicious investment of resources in multiple strategic initiatives." An enterprise suggests a bold, purposeful, energetic venture of major scope, extreme difficulty and high level of risk. In this sense, the first century expansion of the church could be properly termed a spiritual enterprise. For similar reasons, the questing spirit and expansive scope of the Catalytic ministry would qualify it as an enterprise.

Over the last decade, I have made a study of the success and failure of various types of enterprises ranging from World War II, the building of the Panama Canal, the development of successful college and pro athletic teams, the development of successful businesses, and the building of local churches. I have also given much thought to the expansion of the church as recorded in Acts, and Jesus' preparation for the birth and expansion of the church as recorded in the Gospels. As most of you know, the primary area of application of my study has been the development of effective local and national Campus Crusade for Christ movements.

In the course of these studies, I have become convinced that a successful enterprise is not created, developed, sustained and expanded by accident. Whether it be successful coaches, CEO's, pastors or Campus Crusade for Christ staff, I observed common patterns of leadership behavior. These leadership

patterns provide helpful insight as to how and why some enterprises succeed and others fail.

What I am about to share with you reflects what I have learned from observing and reading about these men and women. The following material is not a "strategic planning format". It is at least that, I believe, but much more. What you are bout to read is better described as an "enterprise building process". As such, I believe that the six categories listed below are not only planning categories, but additionally and primarily, a framework for how an **Enterprise Leader (EL)** must think, act and interact . This article is not about properly defining planning categories so a leader can have productive bi-annual planning meeting—though it may help toward that end. It is about coming to terms with how an effective enterprise leader (EL) thinks, acts and interacts on a daily basis with team members and others crucial to the success of the enterprise.

THE SIX COMPONENTS-STEPS OF THE ENTERPRISE BUILDING PROCESS

1. SETTING DIRECTION

The effective enterprise-leader (EL) has integrated Covey's habit of "beginning with the end in mind". The EL must be obsessed (in a healthy way of course) with framing, clarifying and passionately communicating the direction of the spiritual enterprise. Toward this end, the EL must, with constancy and clarity, passion and persuasive ability, ask and answer four crucial directional questions.

1. What are we living for? (purpose)
2. What are we shooting for? (mission)
3. What are we standing for? (values)
4. What are we rooting for? (vision)

Most of us need the cognitive clarity provided by a discussion of mission, (what, exactly, will we do for whom?) and the affective connection with the enterprise provided by a discussion of purpose, vision and values. The EL must engage potential team members, partners, sponsors, constituents and workers in dialogue on these directional issues if he or she hopes to build a critical mass of human and financial resources sufficient to sustain and expand the enterprise (Step 3). It is noteworthy that John Kotter (*Leading Change*, 1996) believes that top leadership consistently under communicates vision by a factor of 100.

2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: FACING THE FACTS

While the EL must be able to scan the directional horizon for possibilities and opportunities, he or she must, simultaneously, come to terms with the contemporary situation. The EL is equally at home in the world of possibility and the world of mundane reality. The leader must have one foot in the desired future of the enterprise in order to motivate and inspire, with the other foot firmly planted in the real world of today's pressing needs and sometimes bleak realities. The possibility of "what might be" must be joined by a comprehensive and realistic assessment of "what is" in the mind of the leader.

God works in the real world, as it really is, not in the world as the leader hopes it to be. So, while the leader must begin with the end in mind, he or she must begin the work of building the enterprise in a world far different the one envisioned. While Nehemiah had a picture of God's desired future for Jerusalem, he courageously faced the grim reality of Jerusalem's broken walls and demoralized populace (Nehemiah 1&2). So, getting the facts straight isn't antithetical to living by faith, prayer and hope. It does, however, help the leader pray and hope more accurately—and fervently. Leaders through the ages have acknowledged the inspirational value of a cool-headed and courageous facing of the facts. Adults are motivated by honesty, not happy talk.

Toward this end, the leader must courageously ask and answer questions that connect the directional imperatives of the enterprise to the real world in which the fledgling enterprise must take its first steps. Situational Analysis categories would include, but not be limited to (1) personnel, (2) money, (3) past performance, (4) relevant societal trends, (5) political/organizational issues, and (6) technology.

3. CRITICAL MASS: IDENTIFYING, GATHERING, SUSTAINING AND EXPANDING YOUR RESOURCE BASE:

The spiritual leader must define with clarity and precision the resources required for closing the gap between the present world of "what is" and the future world of "what could be." The leader must think clearly and deeply about "how much of what" it will take to (1) blast out of the inertia of present reality, (2)

establish and sustain two or three substantial "wins" along the critical path, and (3) sustain the enterprise at a "mission accomplishing" level of performance.

I define critical mass as sponsored leaders and their tools. Allow me to clarify. By sponsored I mean that the leader must have both divine and human/organizational sponsorship (support, authorization, right of way, etc.). Divine sponsorship is always required. Human/organizational sponsorship is usually required. Jesus had the sponsorship of God the Father. This sponsorship was revealed (it was always true) in His baptism (Mark 1:9-11) and confirmed throughout His ministry (John 8:12-58). Nehemiah first sought and obtained the Lord's sponsorship for rebuilding the wall (Nehemiah 1), and then secured the sponsorship of King Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2). Paul and Barnabas received sponsorship from the Lord and the church at Antioch (Acts 13: 1-3).

Without God's sponsorship, you've got nothing. Moses' first try at liberating the nation of Israel did not fail because of his lack of leadership skill. It failed because, unlike Nehemiah, Moses failed to secure divine sponsorship. Typically, with God's sponsorship, you will have all the human sponsorship and resources you need to accomplish His will (where He guides, He provides). But even if human sponsorship is not forthcoming (as in the case of Moses' second try), one person sponsored by God is still a majority.

By leaders I am describing those who serve the enterprise in light of the 4-R model of leadership (Relationships, Roles, Responsibilities, Results). I don't mean to minimize this point. We could, of course, discuss this at length. Suffice it to say that without an expanding base of sponsored leaders, the enterprise will go nowhere. Enterprise leaders are distinguished from "workers" and "experts". Els are the men and women who own the enterprise; who have a personal stake in its success. I first heard it more than twenty-five years ago and it is still true: A movement expands only as quickly as leadership is developed.

Sponsored leaders need tools. To quote Saddam, the "mother" of all tools is money, because with it, you can rent or buy all other tools (technology, information, physical plant, materials, expertise, workers, etc.). There is no getting around this point. Leaders are preoccupied with securing the financial resources required to accomplish the mission. With money,

the wise leader can secure every resource needed for mission success except for sponsored leaders.

The Crucial Nature of Critical Mass
The spiritual leader spends a disproportionate amount of his or her time obsessing (in a healthy way of course), sweating, laboring, and praying over the process of identifying, gathering, sustaining and expanding critical mass. Jesus invested a major portion of His three years of public ministry doing this, knowing that His small band of disciples would comprise the nucleus of the first century church. Read John 17 in light of this observation to catch a glimpse of the priority and intensity of this task for Jesus. Nehemiah devoted his first days of leadership to gathering critical mass (Nehemiah 1&2). I am told by leaders in the non-profit realm (coaches, politicians and educational executives) that, as a rule, more than 70% of their time is invested in "critical mass" oriented work (e.g. recruiting talent, developing the next generation of leaders, raising money, and securing sponsorship).

In the area of interpersonal relationships and community building, love indeed covers a multitude of sins (I Peter 4:8). Paul's point in I Corinthians 13 is that if you do this one thing "love one another", you will find yourself doing 50 other crucial things (building up one another, treating one another with dignity and respect, strengthening the Christian community, facilitating one's sanctification, etc.). Love fulfills the requirements of the Law.

Similarly, in the broader sense of building the enterprise, I believe, it is true that "critical mass covers a multitude of sins". Simply put, people are attracted by and to those who love them. Financial resources are attracted by and to leaders who will use them wisely in light of the God-given mission of the enterprise. If you as a leader do this one thing (focus on critical mass) you will find yourself doing fifty other things crucial to the long-term health and welfare of the enterprise. Develop critical mass and you will foster a sense of momentum. Develop critical mass and volunteers will be attracted to your ministry. Develop critical mass and money will flow to your ministry. Develop critical mass and Kingdom opportunities will come your way. Develop critical mass and it will serve as a magnet to attract the latent, indigenous resources of your community.

Fail to develop critical mass and the most ingenious strategies in the world will fail for lack of leadership.

Fail to develop critical mass and cynicism will abound. Fail to develop critical mass and latent resources will remain hidden. Fail to develop critical mass and leaders and money will flow away from, not to you. Fail to develop critical mass and God will direct others to do the important Kingdom work that He has called you to do.

The sufficiency Issue

As I have taught this process over the last six years, the most asked question is "how do I know when I have enough critical mass?" Time and space allow for only a brief answer. I define sufficient critical mass as "enough to get more". The critical mass question must be asked at three levels. The Level I question is typically asked in the earliest stages of the enterprise where the survival of the enterprise is at stake. At this stage, the essential issue is, "do I have enough of the right kind of leaders to attract more leaders and more money such that we can "stay in business". Level II frames the sufficiency question as follows: Do I have enough of the right kind of sponsored leaders to initiate and sustain a number (2-3) of "wins" along the critical path. Do I have enough leadership and money to establish the fact, through my activities, events and strategies, that ours is a substantive, credible and sustainable enterprise? When people see who we are and what we are doing, are they motivated to participate and fund our enterprise? Level III asks: (1) Do we have enough critical mass to close the gap between our vision and daily reality; and (2) Do those involved in the enterprise (or even those watching from a distance) see concrete evidence that our vision is becoming reality and that our mission effectiveness is increasing and sustainable?

4. CHARTING YOUR COURSE: CRITICAL PATH

As sufficient critical mass is secured, the leader must begin to act in the real world in light of the enterprise's directional imperatives. The critical path is comprised of the events and strategies (your core offerings to use a business term) designed to close the gap between your vision and reality. The critical path is focused on "mission critical" activities. By this is meant those activities designed to serve those targeted by your mission (i.e. what will we do for whom?).

The critical path is the "stuff", the daily and weekly activities, the "big events", the strategies that get you where you want to go. As such, this is a familiar topic for most leaders. We are used to doing the programs

and strategies that take us where we want to go. The critical path is the EL's answer to the questions: (1) In light of our mission, what should we do next and why, and (2) What has to happen next to get us where we need to go.

The leader's task in the critical path arena is two-fold: (1) to rank by priority and implement in sequence the specific activities required to accomplish the mission; and (2) to integrate critical path activities such that, taken as a whole, the activities create synergy (as opposed to chaos and fragmentation) and generate sufficient resources (as opposed to draining the enterprise of money and people) o sustain and expand the enterprise.

Let me explain. The implementation of critical path events, strategies and programs should sustain, not drain the enterprise. It should expand, not decrease the critical mass, both money and people, of the enterprise. The activities on the critical path should serve as investments (once the strategy or event is implemented, there is good reason to hope for an interest-bearing return) not expenditures (once spent, forever gone) of the enterprise's resources. The critical path should provide multiple opportunities to establish and expand partnerships with other Campus Crusade ministries and local churches. In short, the implementation of a critical path strategy or event should make the catalytic enterprise stronger, not weaker; more integrated and less fragmented, more connected to valued partners and less isolated.

Toward this end, the leader must provide for the proper selection, sequencing and integration of critical path activities. All critical path activities should: (1) reflect the mission and vision of the enterprise; and (2) wisely investment the enterprise's resource base.

5. RELEASING RESOURCES TO NECESSITY AND OPPORTUNITY

The EL is called upon to match precious resources with mission necessities and unforeseen opportunities along the critical path. This step is about the wise and efficient investment of resources to support critical path activities. It is about implementing efficient, mission-driven stewardship systems. Leaders must design and implement a budgeting system to insure that the money, leaders, information and other resources generated by the critical mass are channeled to the critical path in a timely and efficient manner.

This step places emphasis on getting enough of the right resources to the right critical path needs and opportunities in time and in proper amounts given the overall strength of the enterprise's resource base. In implementing this step, the leader must ask: (1) what critical path strategies and events deserve how much of an investment of our resource base, and (2) how can we most efficiently get the right combination of resources (matching personnel and money with opportunity) to the right investment opportunity at the right time.

6. GETTING SMARTER: LEARNING

This step is about giving oneself, other leaders, all workers and indeed the entire enterprise permission to get smarter. It is about making sure that the leaders and the entire enterprise are "getting smarter" by the month, week, day, even hour. Els are not only voracious learners. They also create and sustain the systems, disciplines and activities that enable the entire enterprise to learn from failure, make necessary adjustments and generally "get smarter" at accomplishing the mission. Els promote an organizational culture that encourages the free flow of information, honest appraisal of performance and open dialogue with respect to differences of approach (tactics, tools, strategies and style) in pursuing the mission. Toward this end, Els establish and formalize learning processes that: (1) keep the enterprise, its leaders and workers "in touch with reality", and (2) invite and promote dialogue and feedback from other leaders, volunteers, students, and partners.

The objective of this step is nothing less than the creation of a flow of information that provides timely and relevant feedback on the overall mission effectiveness of the enterprise. The implementation of this step insures that enterprise building is a dynamic daily process and not a static, quarterly event.

SUMMARY

I am convinced that each of these six steps must be attended to on a weekly, daily, even hourly basis by the top leadership if the enterprise is to flourish. Each component-step is ignored to the peril of the long-term health and welfare of the enterprise. Top leaders take each of these components seriously, to the point of preoccupation. In my interaction with leaders from a variety of settings, this is especially true of the direction setting, critical mass and learning steps.

Further Reading

Gilliland, D.S. (1983). Pauline Theology & Mission Practice. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI

Kotter, J. (1996). Leading Change. Harvard Business School Press: Boston, MA.